

## Book review

### **Turning Numbers into Knowledge, Mastering the Art of Problem Solving<sup>☆</sup>**

Jonathan G. Koomey, Analytics Press, Oakland, CA, USA, 2001, Hardback, ISBN 0-9706019-0-5, p. 221

‘Turning Numbers into Knowledge’ is a different book than books reviewed previously in this journal. Instead of an assessment of an important subject or field, this book is a guide to ‘tricks of the trade’. The book takes the reader through different steps in information collection, analysis and presentation of the results. Solving problems takes more than proficiency with basic calculations, it requires (among other things) understanding how people use information, learning the art of presentation, and acknowledging the important distinction between facts and values. The book is a comprehensive guide to these skills. It is full of tools and tips to locate data, assess it and present it. In the book, there are many useful references to good books and other sources to improve your analytical skills. The book is written for beginning problem solvers in business, government, consulting, and research professions, and for students of business and public policy, but also for the more experienced researcher.

Statistical information, be it from your own experiments or published data, needs very careful analysis. The book’s audience consists mainly of younger researchers, and the book may be helpful for students to develop analytical skills for statistical analysis.

The book builds heavily on the experiences of the author in the field of energy efficiency analysis, and it would have been interesting to show other problems or other experiences as well, to help the reader find different options to approach an analytical problem. Still, the examples shown in the book could easily be translated to problems important to readers of Resources, Conservation and Recycling. Also, as the author’s experience is mainly based on his work in the United States, and many of the tips for data sources are unique for the US. However, the methods and tricks for data presentation are universal. In all, the book makes a useful contribution to learning and improving data analysis in a concise way.

As said the book is mainly useful for students and young researchers. As such I would recommend using the book in college and university classes. This book will

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<sup>☆</sup> More information on the book can be found on: <http://www.numbersintoknowledge.com>.

hopefully contribute to improved analysis and presentation, and may be even to a further quality improvement of future manuscripts in Resources, Conservation and Recycling.

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